

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 A-01 OPR-02

SY-05 HEW-04 OMB-01 /085 W

-----114236 301929Z /44

R 301458Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1571

INFO AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, BE

SUBJECT: MMRA - WORKERS OCCUPY LUXEMBOURG EMBASSY

REF: (A) LUXEMBOURG 0666, (B) BRUSSELS 10570

SUMMARY: PROTESTING A PLANT REORGANIZATION INVOLVING THE LOSS OF JOBS, BELGIAN WORKERS FROM THE ATHUS FACILITY OF THE BELGO-LUXEMBOURG STEEL PLANT OF MMRA (REFTELS) ON AUGUST 29 OCCUPIED THE LUXEMBOURG EMBASSY FOR ONE AND A HALF HOURS. THE POLICE REMAINED OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY AT THE REQUEST OF THE AMBASSADOR. THE OCCUPATION WAS PEACEFUL AND THE EVACUATION VOLUNTARY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE SMALL BELGIAN/LUXEMBOURGEOIS STEEL PLANT, MMRA (REFTELS), WHICH EARLIER IN THE SUMMER HAD FEATURED SABOTAGE AND THE BLOCKING OF INTERNATIONAL RAIL AND ROAD TRAFFIC, ON AUGUST 29 SAW THE WORKERS TAKE THEIR PROTEST A STEP FURTHER BY OCCUPYING THE LUXEMBOURG EMBASSY IN BRUSSELS FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF.

2. THE SURPRISE OCCUPATION WAS CARRIED OUT PEACEFULLY

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BY 200 WORKERS WHO TRAVELED BY CHARTERED BUS FROM ATHUS TO BRUSSELS. THEY ENTERED AMBASSADOR FISCHBACH'S OFFICE WHERE THEY EXPLAINED THAT, SINCE MMRA IS A LUXEMBOURG-INCORPORATED FIRM IN WHICH THE LUXEMBOURG GOVERNMENT IS A PARTICIPANT, THEIR ACTION WAS AIMED AT PRESSING THE LUXEMBOURG GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS THEIR OWN TO FORCE THE FINANCIAL AND BANKING INTERESTS INVOLVED TO REINVEST

IN THE AREA. THE AMBASSADOR LISTENED TO THE WORKERS' STATEMENT AND ASSURED THEM THAT HE WOULD REPORT IT TO HIS GOVERNMENT.

3. THE ONLY KNOWN DAMAGE CAUSED DURING THE OCCUPATION WAS A BROKEN GLASS DOOR - BROKEN BY A POLICEMAN IN AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE BUILDING. THE WORKERS REPORTEDLY CAUTIONED THE AMBASSADOR AGAINST CALLING FOR FORCEFUL EVACUATION, WARNING THAT, IN THAT EVENT, WORKERS AT ATHUS (BELGIUM) WOULD MARCH ON MMRA PROPERTIES IN RODANGE (LUXEMBOURG). ACCORDINGLY THE POLICE WERE ASKED BY THE AMBASSADOR TO REMAIN OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY. THE OCCUPATION, WHICH WAS TO HAVE LASTED ANOTHER HOUR AND A HALF, WAS CUT SHORT WHEN THE WORKERS REBOARDED THEIR BUSES TO ATTEND A MEETING WITH SOCIALIST MINISTER FOR WALLOON AFFAIRS GUY MATHOT. AFTER LISTENING TO A STATEMENT BY A DELEGATION OF SIX WORKERS, MATHOT SAID THAT THE PROBLEMS OF THE STEEL INDUSTRY IN GENERAL, AND THAT OF MMRA IN PARTICULAR, WERE DIFFICULT BUT THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE STILL GOING ON, AND THAT GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING SEVERAL SCHEMES OF INVESTMENT AND RECONVERSION FOR LUXEMBOURG PROVINCE.

4. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY OCCUPATION WAS AN ACTION PLANNED AND CARRIED OUT BY LOCAL (LUXEMBOURG PROVINCE) OFFICIALS OF THE CSC AND FGTB. IT DID NOT REQUIRE - AND PROBABLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DID NOT HAVE - THE APPROVAL OF THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP. SOME BELGIAN GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES, WHILE HARDLY APPROVING THE OCCUPATION OF AN EMBASSY, MAY NOT HAVE BEEN DISPLEASED TO HAVE THE DEPTH OF FEELINGS ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER FORCEFULLY BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THEIR LUXEMBOURG COLLEAGUES WHO REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN RATHER COOL TO THE DEMANDS OF THE BELGIAN WORKERS EMPLOYED BY MMRA. CHAMBERS

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, STEEL PLANTS, LABOR DISPUTES, DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 2  
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**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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**Reference:** 77 LUXEMBOURG 666, 77 BRUSSELS 10570  
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**TAGS:** ELAB, ECON, BE, US, THE BELGO-LUSEMBOURG STEEL PLANT  
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